LION LEADERS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL

**August Board Meeting Minutes, August 24, 2026**

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| **Board Members Present:**<br>Talal Rojas<br>Julie Medler<br>Tony Stoupas<br>Catherine Jessup<br>Rosann Santos<br>Nicholas Ober<br>Herb Fixler<br>David Schatsky<br>Ana Maria Gomez<br>Ruth Jarmul<br>**Board Members Not in Attendance:**<br>Deborah Dumont | **Members of the Public LION asked to be in Attendance:**<br>Keveney McCrillis, Director of Communications and Strategic Projects<br>Celia Sosa, CEO<br>Leslie Rich, CFO<br>Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing<br><br>**Members of the Public:** |

Tony Stoupas, Board Chair, called for a motion to begin the meeting at 6:03 PM. The motion was seconded by Nick Ober and unanimously approved.

Tony Stoupas moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the June and July meeting minutes, which had been shared via email before the meeting. Nick Ober seconded the motion. The June and July meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Tony Stoupas opened a discussion about the District-Wide Safety plan that has been posted to LION's website for feedback and reviewed by the board. There was a board question about how this plan was developed and whether this was reviewed by a security professional. Celia Sosa answered those questions. There was a comment that there was one name of a former employee on this safety plan and it should be replaced. Keveney McCrillis, Director of Communications, agreed to replace the name before submitting the final version of the plan.

Celia Sosa, LION's Chief Executive Officer, reviewed the CEO report, which was emailed before the meeting. She began discussing the recently received 3-8 NYS testing scores. She indicated that there was excitement and pride around math scores and disappointment around ELA scores. She discussed working closely with MS Principal, Ada Garcia, to come up with an action plan. She indicated that LION would be working closely with an advisor Jeff Wasbe, to analyze the performance and create that action plan. There was a board question about our NWEA scores and their indication that ELA performance would improve. Celia Sosa answered this question. There was a board question about curriculum and dispersion patterns on data. Celia answered those questions. There was a board question about whether there were particular grades that were bringing the ELA average down. Celia Sosa answered that question. There was a board question about what indications there were that proficiency would land where it did before the test. Celia Sosa answered that question. There was a board question about the teaching staff's role in these

scores. Celia Sosa answered that question.

Celia Sosa went on to discuss staff attrition and retention. She highlighted the current figures by division. She discussed the teacher attrition patterns. She discussed the high-performing teacher retention numbers as well, then discussed the plan for filling those vacancies.

Celia shared LION's current enrollment and admissions numbers as well as grade level trends. There was a board question about transportation and its effect on admissions. Celia Sosa answered that question. There was a board question about whether we would or could finance our own bus service. Celia Sosa and Maya Severns answered that question and agreed to investigate further.

Celia announced the transition of Karl Cesar into the Managing Director of Operations position. She discussed the makeup of his team. She announced that Keveney McCrillis would be fully focused on Communications with that transition.

Celia ended her report sharing highlights from LION 101 and updates around the 730 Bryant redesign project. She described the bright, cohesive feel in the classroom spaces and parts of the project that are still being implemented. She turned it over to Keveney McCrillis to discuss the updates to the budget. Keveney discussed the ways the budget has evolved and what the facilities committee approved. She asked for a budget increase to $1.5 million dollars to see through the parts of the project LION has committed to. Julie Medler, head of the finance committee, supports this financially. There was a board question about the timeline for the other phases of the project. Keveney McCrillis answered that question. Tony Stoupas called for a vote to increase the budget to $1.5 million. Julie Medler seconded the vote, and it was unanimously approved.

Leslie Rich, LION's Chief Financial Officer, then presented her financial report, which was shared via email along with LION's monthly financials. Leslie Rich discussed the close of June 30th and the positive variance to the budget and healthy KPIs driven by the student FTEs. She discussed the debt coverage ratio of 2.2 and the KPIs, all of which are "Good" or "Excellent." She discussed that there were likely some additional accruals as they go through the audit.

Leslie Rich went on to discuss the FY 26 positive variances and expenses. She discussed conservative SpEd revenue projections and how LION controlled expenses. She echoed the statements from the CEO about the positive work on the 730 Redesign Project.

Leslie ended her presentation discussing where her team was with the financial statement audit. She discussed the new finance software that the team is currently using, RAMP and MARTIS. She then discussed that the team has some staff retention initiatives to research and those findings would be brought back to the board.

Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing, then presented her marketing and development report, which was shared with the board via email before the meeting. She highlighted the Summer Boost program and indicated that LION met the attendance marker and would likely receive the rest of the Bloomberg grant. She discussed that this was the first-ever Kindergarten summer camp, funded and run by LION, and its positive impact. She then discussed historical funds raised and how those compared with FY 2026. She will present the fundraising development plan at next month's board meeting.

Maya continued to discuss the audit that consultants did for LION and their findings. She highlighted that a large portion of the fundraising revenue is coming from a small number of donors and foundations. She discussed the risks that it poses and what her team is doing to mitigate those risks. There was a board question about the foundations' relationships with each other and whether success with one could be a source for others. Maya Severns answered that question. Maya highlighted the recommendations from the development and fundraising audit. Finally, Maya asked the board to save the date for the fall social fundraiser: October 15th. A board member asked if this was a community event or a fundraising event. Maya Severns answered that question. Ruth Jarmul announced that after this year she would be stepping down as the Development Committee Chair and that the new chair would be Ana Maria Gomez.

Tony Stoupas then asked for committee updates. There were none that hadn't previously been given.

Tony Stoupas asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

Tony Stoupas moved to enter into executive session at 7:05 PM.

Tony Stoupas moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM. Talal Rojas seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

*Notes prepared by Keveney McCrillis.*